

Today, I will vote against HR 3660. For the third time in five years, the House of Representatives is considering a bill to ban so-called "partial birth" abortions. For the third time since I came to Congress we will be voting on a bill that is almost certainly unconstitutional and will be vetoed by the President.

The advocates of the bill suggest that this version has been changed to address some of the constitutional concerns. This bill does recognize that the lives of mothers have a claim to protection, but it remains silent when there is a threat to a woman's health.

During the previous consideration of this type of legislation, Congress and the President heard from many women for whom this type of legislation would have dire consequences. These women and their families were all confronted with tragic situations and, with the qualified medical direction of their doctors, made the incredibly personal and difficult decision to terminate their pregnancy. Congress has no place in that decision. This legislation would have a catastrophic effect on the lives of families like these.

HR 3660 is more about politics than good policy. If the Congress were serious about preventing abortion, it would not be fighting efforts to make family planning more widely available. If it were serious about protecting children, it would do much more to ensure available child care and quality schools.

Proponents of this bill show gruesome pictures of objectionable procedures and ignore the pictures of the many real families who have had to make difficult decisions in the face of tragic circumstances. We cannot continue to ignore those pictures and the wrenching reality they represent.

My position on this most sensitive of personal decisions is very simple: Congress should not interfere. I will oppose this legislation.